

**POLS Y201: Controversies in U.S. Politics**  
**Tuesday & Thursday, 11:30 - 12:45 pm, Course 31251, DW1165**  
**Indiana University South Bend, Fall 2019**

Instructor Contact Information:  
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Fall 2019 Office Hours:  
3-5 P.M. Tues.; 1-3 P.M. Thurs.  
**and by appointment**  
2181 Wiekamp Hall

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**PLEASE USE CANVAS EMAIL FOR CLASS-RELATED MESSAGES!**

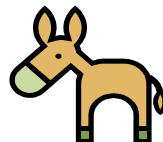
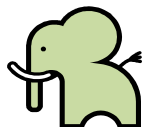
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**Course Description:**

This course fulfills the Campus General Education Requirement for critical thinking. We will discuss the difference between good and bad reasoning, including how to build a valid, cogent, and compelling argument, while avoiding common logical fallacies.

This is an interactive, participatory course that will investigate some of the most controversial issues facing U.S. citizens today. Democracy is based upon public debate, dialogue and decision-making. This course will introduce you to a number of contemporary policy debates in order to illustrate how political scientists and journalists address these controversies. This course is designed to provide you with skills and knowledge that can be used to form educated opinions about a wide variety of political issues. It will also introduce you to the process of deliberative dialogue, a process that encourages civil dialogue and deliberation that promotes a careful consideration of diverse perspectives on public policy options on a range of key issues.

There are no easy answers to many of the dilemmas we will investigate. When confronted by differing opinions and points of view, it is necessary to develop the ability to comprehend, evaluate, and make decisions in the face of uncertainty. Whether as a citizen or a political leader, one must be able to evaluate the pros and cons, benefits and costs of various policy options. In this course, you will be encouraged to form your own opinions about the best direction for U.S. social, economic, and foreign policy. As you do so, you will be asked to separate your belief in the “rightness” or “justness” of a particular policy position from your analysis of the relative strength of a particular set of opposing policy articles and arguments. You will be pushed to articulate ways in which each author could strengthen the arguments you read for class. The use of such *critical thinking skills* can have a profound impact upon one’s life in terms of academic, professional, and personal success. Such skills are also necessary to achieve informed citizenship and to participate fully in the political life of the nation. This course will foster active learning designed to develop your critical thinking, writing and oral communication skills. **WELCOME TO THE CONVERSATION!**



## **Campuswide General Education Learning Objectives for Critical Thinking:**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Identify reasons that support a claim
- ✓ Construct arguments for and against a claim
- ✓ Use widely accepted standards for evaluating the quality of evidence and reasoning

## **Specific Course Objectives:**

1. To enable you to distinguish between good and bad reasoning.
2. To increase your ability to detect logical fallacies.
3. To introduce you to a number of concepts, issues, and theories in contemporary political science so that you will be a more intelligent consumer of information about our political system and public policy.
4. To provide you with critical thinking skills that will enable you to analyze, evaluate, and make decisions concerning complex contemporary issues in politics.
5. To help you to improve your communication skills in order to enhance your effectiveness in expressing your views on the issues.
6. To encourage you to become more tolerant of ambiguity and diversity as it pertains to political issues and to increase your ability to deal with multiple points of view.
7. To facilitate your assessment of your own personal political beliefs so that you can know (and explain) what beliefs you hold and why you hold them.

## **Critical Thinking Requirement:**

This course fulfilled the campus General Education Requirement for critical thinking.



## **Required Reading Materials:**

This course will utilize open educational resources, free websites, and grant-funded issue guides that have been purchased by your instructor at no cost to you.

- ✓ Textbook: Fundamental Lessons of Logic by Matthew Knachel  
<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/fundamental-methods-of-logic>
- ✓ Websites: <https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com/>, <https://yourbias.is/>, [www.procon.org](http://www.procon.org)
- ✓ Website: <https://thebestschools.org/magazine/15-logical-fallacies-know/>
- ✓ Fallacies Study Guide: [https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/fallacies\\_list.html](https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/fallacies_list.html)
- ✓ National Issues Forums Guides: <https://www.nifi.org/en/issue-guides/issue-guides>

- ✓ Academic and news articles posted by the instructor to Canvas

This course will also help you to sharpen your Internet research skills as you consult **up-to-date articles, stories, studies, and websites** available online. Students will consult the *New York Times*, *Indianapolis Star*, *South Bend Tribune*, *Elkhart Truth*, *Washington Post*, and other local and national news sources to answer up-to-date homework questions and provide in-class updates on key policy debates. What's changed? What hasn't changed? Why aren't these issues settled? How can you get involved? Tracking the evolution of a policy issue and keeping up-to-date with recent political developments a valuable skill you will use throughout your lives as active citizens.



### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Week 1**

August 27-29

#### **Tuesday: Introduction to the Course**

The first session will include an introduction to the course and the instructor, a review of the syllabus, and an opportunity to meet your classmates.

#### **Thursday: Introduction to Good and Bad Reasoning**

We will discuss critical thinking including the differences between: premises and conclusions, exposition and explanation, cogent and fallacious reasoning, deductive and inductive reasoning, facts and beliefs, religious faith and scientific method.

#### **Week 2**

September 3-5

#### **Critical Thinking: Group Work on Logic and Reasoning**

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 1: The Basics of Logical Analysis

#### **Homework Review & Class Exercises in Critical Thinking**

You will work in groups to complete a worksheet covering key material from Chapter 1 in your OER textbook.

Be sure to bring a copy of the reading with you to class.

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 1: The Basics of Logical Analysis

<b>HOMEWORK #1 DUE Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> (online, 20 points)</b>
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**Submit this and ALL homework to Canvas (see QUIZZES).**

**Homework must be submitted to Canvas before class to receive CREDIT. Late homework will not be accepted.**



**Week 3**  
September 10-12

**Critical Thinking: Fallacies of Relevance**

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 2: Informal Logical Fallacies  
Resource: Logical Fallacies Handlist: Arguments to Avoid  
This week, we will begin our discussion of common mistakes in reasoning. We will focus on the following logical fallacies: appeal to force, *ad hominem*, *argumentum ad populum* (bandwagon approach, patriotic approach, snob approach), appeal to tradition, appeal to improper authority, *argumentum ad misericordium*, argument from adverse consequences, argument from personal incredulity. Students will actively construct their own examples and diagnose the problems we discuss in class.

**HOMEWORK #2 DUE Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

**Week 4**  
September 17-19

**Critical Thinking: Constitution Week Lunch-n-Learn Series**

**What is your opinion? What are your biases?**

Consult the yourbias website. Learn the 24 biases.  
Complete the homework assignment before class on Tuesday.  
We will discuss the topics of **Hate Speech on Campus** (Tuesday) and **Guns on Campus** (Thursday).  
Consider how your own biases shape your reactions and views. Also consider what you've learned about logic and fallacies of relevance. We'll meet at 11:30 A.M. in SAC 225 both days this week.

**HOMEWORK #3 DUE Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

**Extra Credit Opportunity: STRONGLY ENCOURAGED!**

**Saving the Republic: A House Divided, Thursday, 9/17/19**

**6:00 – 7:30 P.M. University Grill**

*Every American is affected by the divisions and outrage that prevent us from making progress on urgent problems. This public forum is designed to help people deliberate together about how we should approach the issue.*

**Week 5**  
September 24-26

**Critical Thinking: Component Fallacies**

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 2: Informal Logical Fallacies  
Resource: Logical Fallacies Handlist: Arguments to Avoid  
This week we will continue our discussion of common mistakes in reasoning. We will focus on the following logical fallacies: begging the question, circular reasoning, hasty generalization (fallacy of accident, misleading statistics), false cause, irrelevant conclusion (red herring, tu quoque), strawman, non sequitur, slippery slope, either/or fallacy, faulty analogy, undistributed middle term, contradictory premises ("logical paradox"), special pleading.

#### **HOMEWORK #4 DUE Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

##### **Week 6**

October 1-3

##### **Critical Thinking: Fallacies of Ambiguity & Omission**

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 2: Informal Logical Fallacies

Resource: Logical Fallacies Handlist: Arguments to Avoid

This week we will continue our discussion of common mistakes in reasoning. We will focus on the following logical fallacies:

Equivocation, amphibole (indeterminate), composition, division, fallacy of reification (misplaced concreteness), stacking the deck, 'no true scotsman fallacy, argument for the negative, argument from a lack of evidence ("argumentum ad ignorantium"), hypothesis contrary to fact (argumentum ad speculum), complex question (including loaded question and double-barreled question).

#### **HOMEWORK #5 DUE Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> (20 points)**

##### **Week 7**

October 8-10

##### **Critical Thinking: Fallacies of Language & Math**

This week we will study fallacies of linguistic emphasis (accent, quoting out of context, equivocation, faulty analogy, and manipulative framing) and misuse of statistics (small sample, unrepresentative sample, hasty conclusion, etc.) We will also discuss common problem with public opinion polls, including question wording and ordering.

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 5, Parts 2: Argument from Analogy

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 5, Part 3: Causal Reasoning

Reading: Knatchel Chapter 6, Part 5: How to Lie with Statistics

Resource: Handout - Problems with Public Opinion Polls (handout)

#### **HOMEWORK #6 DUE Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

##### **Week 8**

October 15

##### **Exam 1 – Review Session**

Come prepared to ASK QUESTIONS, complete sample questions, and learn from the questions and comments of your peers.



October 17

##### **Exam 1 – In-Class Exam (100 points)**

The exam covers all material from weeks 1-6.

Closed-book, closed-notes exam.

Be in class on time and ready take the test!

Make-up exams will be allowed only in case of extreme, and documented, emergencies. Documentation (e.g. medical release form, funeral director letter, police report) must be on official letterhead and include a phone number for verification and/or instructor follow-up questions.



**Week 9**  
October 22-24

**Critical Thinking: Detecting and Rejecting Fake News**  
**NO CLASS on TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22<sup>nd</sup> – FALL BREAK.**  
**BE SURE TO ATTEND CLASS ON THURSDAY, OCT. 24<sup>th</sup>.**

This week we will study the steps to take in fighting digital polarization by giving you the tools needed to detect and reject fake news. Use these “four moves” to educate your friends and to help stop the spread of fake news. High quality evidence is needed to support logical arguments and good reasoning. Manufactured fraudulent evidence misleads people into reaching false, even dangerous, conclusions.

Resources:

Website: <https://www.aascu.org/AcademicAffairs/ADP/DigiPo/>

- ✓ Web literacy for student factcheckers (Mike Caulfield)
- ✓ Evaluating evidence: the cornerstone of civic online reasoning

**Week 10**  
October 29-31

**In-Class Debate: Capital Punishment – PLEASE BE PREPARED!**

- *Tuesday: Team Preparation*

*Thursday: In-Class Debate & Debriefing*

Reading: Robert E. Lee – Deserving to Die

Eric Freedman – The Case Against the Death Penalty

ProCon Website - <https://deathpenalty.procon.org/>

**Critical Thinking Task:** Identify the three strongest arguments on each side of this policy debate. How do opponents respond to each argument? What evidence supports each claims? How persuasive is that evidence? Can you find additional evidence to back up these claims? Be sure to consider the issues of morality, constitutionality, deterrence, retribution, irrevocable mistakes, and cost.

Is the death penalty the only just penalty for certain heinous crimes? Does capital punishment improve public safety? What is the different between retribution and justice? Are you willing to risk the execution of an innocent person to keep the penalty in place? Can the penalty administered without discrimination based on race, class, and mental ability? Will executions provide closure for victims’ families? Are adequate attorneys provided to protect defendants’ constitutional rights? Should physicians be present at state-ordered executions? Be sure to search the full range of pro-con arguments, information guides, and notable quotes when preparing your case for or against the death penalty.

<b>HOMEWORK #7 DUE Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> (20 points)</b>
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**Week 11**  
November 5-7

**DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE: Coming to America:  
Who Should We Welcome, What Should We Do?**

*Tuesday: Class Preparation / Thursday: Public Forum*

Reading:

- ✓ National Issues Forum - Issue Guide – Coming to America
- ✓ ProCon Website - <https://immigration.procon.org/>
- ✓ Relevant News Articles – see Canvas

The immigration issue affects virtually every American, directly or indirectly, often in deeply personal ways. We will deliberate together about how we should approach the issue. We'll consider three options reflecting different ways of understanding what is at stake. Should we strictly enforce the law and deport people who are here without permission, or would deporting millions of people outweigh their crime? Should we welcome more newcomers to build a more vibrant and diverse society, or does this pose too great a threat to national unity? Should we accept more of the growing numbers of refugees from war-torn regions, or should we avoid the risk of allowing in people whose backgrounds may not have been fully checked? Should our priority be to help immigrants assimilate into our distinctively American way of life, including learning English, or should we instead celebrate a growing mosaic of different peoples?

In thinking about the contemporary landscape, we will also consider the following questions: Should we build a fence or wall on the Mexican-US border? How should we treat those who try to cross our border without proper authorization and documentation? Is it ever okay to separate immigrant children from their parents? Do the conditions of immigrant detention facilities make them a threat to immigrants' safety and welfare? Does detaining people under such conditions violate human rights laws? Should harsh detention policies be used as a deterrent to future immigrants? Should the U.S. invest more in other countries to improve country conditions and reduce the "push" factors that cause people to flee?

Be prepared to discuss and deliberate about these critical issues using the National Issues Forum format and issue guide. Ready to MODERATE? Talk to Dr. Bennion!

**HOMEWORK #8 DUE Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

**Week 12**  
November 12-14

**DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE: Climate Choices**  
**How Should We Meet the Challenges of a Warming Planet?**

*Tuesday: Class Preparation / Thursday: Public Forum*

Reading:

- ✓ National Issues Forum – Issue Guide – Climate Choices
- ✓ ProCon Website - <https://climatechange.procon.org/>
- ✓ Contemporary News Articles

All around is evidence that the climate is changing. Summers are starting earlier and lasting longer. Heat waves are becoming more frequent and intense. Dry regions are getting drier and wet regions are seeing heavier rains. Record cold and snowfalls blanket some parts of the country, while record fires ravage forests across the West.

Occasional odd weather and weather cycles are nothing unusual. But the more extreme and unpredictable weather being experienced around the world points to dramatic changes in climate—the conditions that take place over years, decades, and longer.

Climate disruptions have some people worried about their health, their children, their homes, their livelihoods, their communities, and even their personal safety. They wonder about the future of the natural areas they enjoy and the wild animals and plants that live there. In addition, there are growing concerns about our national security and how climate change might affect scarce resources around the planet and increase global tensions.

While the public continues to debate the causes of climate change, we will consider three alternative approaches for dealing with its effects: (1) sharply reduce carbon emissions, (2) prepare and protect our communities, or (3) accelerate innovation. Be prepared to discuss and deliberate about the possible solutions to climate change using the National Issues Forum format and issue guide.

<b>HOMEWORK #9 DUE Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> (20 points)</b>
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**Week 13**  
November 19-21

**DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE: Keeping America Safe:**  
**What is Our Biggest Threat? How Should We Respond?**

*Tuesday: Class Preparation / Thursday: Public Forum*

Reading:

- ✓ National Issues Forum - Issue Guide – Keeping America Safe
- ✓ ProCon Website
- ✓ Contemporary News Articles

Today's headlines can be daunting: A lone terrorist attacks civilians, including American tourists, in cities around the globe; Russia flexes its military muscles and interferes in elections; and North Korea has assembled an arsenal of missiles capable of striking the continental United States.

Americans have rarely faced such a variety of threats. China has become an economic powerhouse, its competition threatening American prosperity, its foreign aid and influence rivaling our own. Climate change and infectious diseases that can spread from an isolated village to any major city remind us that the natural world also poses dangers that affect every country on earth.

A major conflict in the Middle East could have severe implications for the US and global economy. No wonder Americans are divided over how to keep our country safe in today's dangerous and increasingly complex world. As we look into the future, what are our biggest threats, and how should we invest our money, our people, and our reputation to ward them off?

Should we make America's needs our top priority? Should we assert U.S. power abroad? Should we work with other nations to solve global problems? Be prepared to discuss and deliberate about these critical issues using the National Issues Forum format and issue guide. Ready to MODERATE? Talk to Dr. Bennion!

<b>HOMEWORK #10 DUE Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> (20 points)</b>
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**Week 14**  
November 26-28

**CREATE YOUR OWN GUN LAWS.**

No class on THURSDAY this week.

THANKSGIVING BREAK BEGINS AFTER LAST CLASS 11/26.

**Tuesday's Agenda:**

Work with a diverse group of peers to discuss and deliberate the controversial issue of gun control. Come prepared to share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences, but also to listen and learn.

**Critical Thinking Task:** Identify the three strongest arguments on each side of this policy debate. How do opponents respond to each argument? What evidence supports each claims? How persuasive is that evidence? Can you find additional evidence to back up these claims? What logical fallacies do you detect in common arguments for or against gun control? Looking at the ProCon website, why do you think it is so difficult to get Americans to agree on gun laws? Why might Congress sometimes oppose legislation supported by the majority of Americans? What specific gun laws would you propose to keep Americans safe?

**In order to prepare for Tuesday's class session complete the policy choices worksheet provided by your instructor.** This worksheet includes a variety of gun laws debated, passed, or proposed in the state legislature or Congress. Bring your copy to class with you on Tuesday. Be ready to compare answers and deliberate with your peers.

Be sure to conduct your own research, starting with the ProCon website before class on Tuesday: <https://gun-control.procon.org/>

**HOMEWORK #11 DUE Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**  
**Grade Replacement** – Replace your lowest HW grade with this score.

**Week 15**  
December 3-5

**STUDENT CHOICE** – There's so much going on in the world of politics. What do YOU want to talk about during our final week of classes? We can go deeper into one of our previous topics, discuss a topic (or topics) we haven't yet discussed, or consider current controversies in our local community. Police-community relations, abortion laws, the national debt, and economic inequality are just a few of the topics making local and national headlines in 2019. Fundamental reforms to our democratic institutions, including how we draw district lines and whether or not to abolish the Electoral College are also underway. Let's talk!

**Also start working on your letters to the editor! Pick a topic soon.**

**Week 16**  
December 10-12

**Course Wrap Up. (Last day of classes is December 14, 2019).**  
**TUESDAY:** Learn how to write a persuasive letter to the editor. Meet with your professor and with a local newspaper editor to get pro-tips on writing short (200 word) and long (700 word) LTEs. Be sure to check out the Voice of the People and Viewpoint articles published recently in the South Bend Tribune. Also consult at least one other local and one national newspaper. What works? What doesn't? Which LTEs grab your attention? Which are most persuasive? What common mistakes do you observe? Pick a topic before class on Tuesday and feel free to ask questions!

**THURSDAY:** Bring your DRAFT LTEs to class with you. This includes your short (<200 words) and longer (<700 words) letters. We will "workshop" these drafts in class through a process of peer review. **This is your chance to get feedback from your instructor and peers!**

**ALL EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON 12/14.  
Please submit to CANVAS ASSIGNMENTS.**

**Week 17**  
December 17

**FINAL EXAM WEEK (100 points)**

**All assignments are due at 11:30 on Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.**

- ✓ Submit your short LTE, 150-200 words, 25 points
- ✓ Submit your longer LTE, 600-700 words, 50 points
- ✓ Submit your LTE critique, one page limit, 25 points

All writing must be original and authored by the student registered for this course. Edit carefully.

The instructor will provide a scoring rubric for each assignment. Follow it closely when writing, editing, and reviewing your own work before submission.

**LATE SUBMISSION PENALTIES:**

after noon on 12/17 (-5%), 12/18 (-10%), 12/19 (-20)

Submit your final exam week assignments **using**  
**Canvas Assignments**.

Electronic submissions should be formatted as **Microsoft Word attachments**. Essays should be properly formatted, edited, and proofread before submission.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the assignments were properly posted and received by the instructor before the deadline. Your work should reflect the knowledge and skills you learned in POLS Y201 this semester.

**Work must be original.**

**Plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course.**



## POLS Y201 ASSIGNMENT TRACKER

ASSIGNMENT	Due	Score	Out of	Drop?
<u>Homework #1 – Good &amp; Bad Reasoning</u>	Sep 3 by 11:30 am		20	
<a href="#">Homework #2 – Fallacious of</a> Relevance	Sep 10 by 11:30 am		20	
<a href="#">Homework #3 – What</a> is Your Bias?	Sep 17 by 11:30 am		20	
<a href="#">Homework #4 – Component</a> Fallacies	Sep 24 by 11:30 am		20	
Homework #5 – Fallacious of Ambiguity & Omission	Oct 1 by 11:30 am		20	
Homework #6 – Fallacies of Language & Math	Oct 8 by 11:30 am		20	
<b>In-Class Examination – Logic, Bias, &amp; Fallacies</b>	<b>Oct 17 by 11:30 am</b>		<b>100</b>	
<a href="#">Homework #7 –</a> Capital Punishment (Pro/Con)	Oct 29 by 11:30 am		20	
<a href="#">Homework</a> #8 – NIF Prep: Coming to America	Nov 5 by 11:30 am		20	
Homework #9 – NIF Prep: Climate Choices	Nov 12 by 11:30 am		20	
<a href="#">Homework #10 – NIF Prep: Keeping</a> America Safe	Nov 19 by 11:30 am		20	
Homework #11 – Gun Policy (Pro/Con) <i>OPTIONAL: Grade Replacement</i>	Nov 26 by 11:30 am		20	
EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS DUE	Dec 14 by 11:30 am		<b>Optional</b>	
<b>NOTE: 10 of 11 HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS WILL COUNT TOWARD YOUR FINAL GRADE.</b>				
<u>Proof of Course Evaluation</u>	Dec 14 by 11:30 am		<b>Required</b>	
Short LTE – Voice of the People (150-200 words)	Dec 17 by 11:30 am		25	
<a href="#">Longer</a> LTE - Viewpoint (600-700 words)	Dec 17 by 11:30 am		50	
LTE Critique (one page)	Dec 17 by 11:30 am		25	
<a href="#">Participation Score</a> – % of Class Sessions Attended <i>Adjusted for participation level. One FREE absence.</i>			100	
--Record Absences Here--				
<b>Total (Points Earned out of 500 Points Possible)</b>				

## **Course Requirements:**

### **PARTICIPATION.**

This is an active-learning course. All students are expected to attend class regularly and contribute to class discussions. Active participation in **both** small group and full class discussions is expected. Participation grades will be calculated using both attendance and participation records.

Attendance: Attend all sessions and participate fully for 100% of the 100 point participation score. Score will reflect the percentage of classes attended, adjusted for level of participation. Each student receives one “free” (no-penalty, no-excuse) absence.

### **HOMEWORK.**

Homework is due almost every week. Homework assignments are located on Canvas. **Submit your answers to CANVAS before class each week.** In your homework, you will begin the critical thinking process. Work must be submitted on time. We will review the homework in class. You are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to print and complete a copy of the Word version of the homework assignment for in-class review. These marked-up assignments (with correct answers and notes) will become your **STUDY NOTES** when preparing for the exams and writing your final exam week assignments. The purpose of these assignments is to prepare for our class sessions. For this reason, late work will not be accepted. Please pay attention to the following important rules:

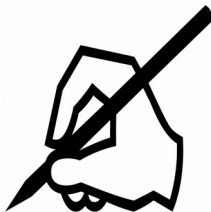
Weekly Homework Assignments: (10 assignments; 20 points each; 200 points total)

- Students should submit all assignments **ONLINE** before class.
- The instructor will assign a grade to each assignment.
- Late homework will not be accepted.
- Students must do their own work. Do not solicit answers from others.

### **IN-CLASS EXAM & WRITING ASSIGNMENTS.**

Students will complete an in-class examination and a final essay. The in-class exam will cover the topic of good and bad reasoning, including common logical fallacies. Students will prepare for this exam through their weekly homework assignments and class discussions. The exam items will mirror those found in the homework and textbook/class exercises. The second major assessment will take place during finals week, using three Letter to the Editor assignments, each with a scoring rubric. Students will prepare for these assignments through their weekly reading, homework, and class discussions.

**Class discussions will be particularly important in preparing students to provide a complete, thoughtful analysis that will earn top marks. Be sure to take good notes.**



### Grading Scale:

Exam 1: 100 points, Writing Assignments: 100 points  
Homework: 200 points, Participation 100 points  
Course Grade: *total points earned/500 points possible*

Based on percentages:

98-100 = A+	93-97 = A	90-92 = A-
87- 89 = B+	83-86 = B	80-82 = B-
77- 79 = C+	73-76 = C	70-72 = C-
67- 69 = D+	63-66 = D	60-62 = D-

Grades are not automatically rounded up. **Purchase your own “grade insurance”** by completing an extra credit project. Any mark below 60 represents a failing grade.



### Grade Insurance:

Canvas assigns grades based on a minimum point threshold. An 89% is a B+, as is an 89.5% and an 89.9%. You must meet the minimum threshold (i.e. 90% = A-) *without rounding* to earn a specific grade. Grades are not automatically rounded up. Do you cringe at the thought of missing a higher grade by one-tenth of a percent? **Take control!** Purchase your own “grade insurance” by completing an extra credit project. Students earn a 1% bonus for a satisfactory (high quality) project. Students may complete 0-3 projects for a maximum grade bonus of 3%.



### Posting of Grades:

All grades will be posted on the Canvas website.  
You are encouraged to check the online gradebook regularly. Notify the instructor immediately if you discover problems with your online gradebook.

### Modifying the Syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus to reflect changes in the academic schedule, emerging opportunities, or student needs. Students are responsible for changes as announced in class and posted to Canvas.



## **Campus Policies & Resources:**

This course falls under IU South Bend's Course Commitment Policy

<https://students.iusb.edu/registrar/policies/attendance.html>. Other policies to know:

- **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES STATEMENT:** Indiana University respects the right of all students to observe their religion. Faculty make reasonable accommodation, upon request, for such observances. It is the responsibility of the student to notify me in a timely manner concerning his/her need for such an accommodation. If any student will require academic accommodations for a religious observance, please provide me with your request by the end of the second week of the course or as soon as you are aware of the need, such as a funeral service. Contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment to discuss your request and identify appropriate options.  
  
**DISABILITIES STATEMENT:** Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities (e.g. mental health, learning, chronic health, physical hearing, vision neurological, etc.). You must have established your eligibility for support services through the Disability Support Services office (Fine Arts Building, Rooms 109-114; telephone number 520-4832 or 4256). Once the DSS office has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for accommodations bring the letter to your professor. Note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place and are not retroactive; captions and alternate media for print materials may take three or more weeks to get produced. For more information, please visit the web site for the Disability Support Services [www.iusb.edu/~sbdss](http://www.iusb.edu/~sbdss).
- **ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT:** Work submitted under your name must be your own. It is the responsibility of the student to know of the prohibited actions such as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, academic, and personal misconduct, and thus, to avoid them. All students are held to the standards outlined in the code. Please reference the entire code for a complete listing (<https://www.iusb.edu/judicial/>). Any violation may result in serious academic penalty, ranging from receiving a warning, to failing the assignment, to failing the course, to expulsion from the University.
- **TITLE IX STATEMENT (Sexual Discrimination/Sexual Misconduct):** As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. Title IX and IU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibit sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with: IU South Bend Student Counseling Center at 574-520-4125 (counseling services); Campus Health and Wellness Center at 574-520-5557 (health and medical services). It is also important that you know that Title IX and University policy require me to share any information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct, with the campus Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit [stopsexualviolence.iu.edu](http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu) to learn more.
- **IU SOUTH BEND STUDENT COUNSELING CENTER (SCC)**  
If you find that life stressors are interfering with your academic or personal success, you are encouraged to contact the SCC as early in the semester as possible. SCC services can help with issues that range from coping with life's transitions to dealing with more serious emotional problems. Group counseling is available for issues such as test anxiety and ADHD. All enrolled students are eligible for personal and confidential short-term counseling services at no cost. The best way to request services is by calling 520-4125. The SCC is located in the Administration

Building, Room A130. Hours are generally 9:00-5:00 Monday through Friday but can vary slightly each semester. For more information: <https://www.iusb.edu/student-counseling/index.php>

**POLS Y201 Extra-Credit Options:**

*Students are welcome to complete up to THREE of the following extra credit assignments. **Each high-quality assignment will boost your final course grade by one percentage point.***

- o Attend an instructor-approved (pre-approved) event and write about what you learned about American politics or some contemporary social/political debate. Want to attend a specific event for extra credit? Talk to the instructor.

<b>NON-REQUIRED (outside of class) AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT EVENTS QUALIFY FOR EXTRA CREDIT IN POLS Y201. SEE SCHEDULE!</b>
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- o Track public opinion on one of the issues discussed in this course. Report your findings in a 2-3 page paper. Document your sources. What do the majority of Americans believe? How have attitudes changed over the past three decades?
- o Watch a political news program. Write a brief (2-3 page) paper describing: 1) the topics of the show, 2) the persons appearing on the show, 3) the main arguments advanced by various speakers, and 4) your own reactions to these arguments. Include a statement of your new, informed, opinion on the issue(s) highlighted by the show. (Program must be pre-approved).

<b>ONE GOOD OPTION IS WNIT'S POLITICALLY SPEAKING. Hosted by your professor, the program airs Friday at 7:00 P.M. on WNIT-TV (re-airing Sundays at 2:00 P.M. and Thursdays at 5:00 P.M.).</b> Past episodes available online at: <a href="http://www.wnit.org/politicallyspeaking">http://www.wnit.org/politicallyspeaking</a>
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- o Read a newspaper or news magazine article related to the subject matter of this course. Write a brief (1-2 page) paper describing: 1) the topic of the article, 2) what you learned by reading the article, 3) how the article relates to what you have learned in this course, and 4) your own reaction to the article. **Use at least two specific references to the newspaper article and two quotes from the course reading materials in your analysis.**
- o Watch a film related to the subject matter of this course. Write a brief (1-2 page) paper describing: 1) the topic of the film, 2) what you learned by watching the film, 3) how the film relates to what you have learned in this course—and how what we learned in class informed your analysis of the film, and 4) your own reaction to film. Be explicit when explaining how

the film relates to at least two **specific concepts or arguments** in the course reading material.